Mission

Volume 18 | Issue 11 Article 1

5-1-1985

Mission: Vol. 18, No. 11

ANNOUNCING THE ANNUAL *MISSION JOURNAL READERS' SEMINAR*

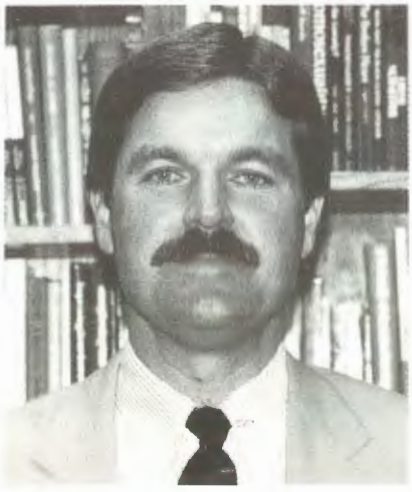
HAVE WE OVERCOME?
REFLECTIONS ON RACE RELATIONS
IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, 1960-1985

Larry James, Richardson, Texas
John Whitley, Houston, Texas

BERING DRIVE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1910 Bering Drive
Houston, Texas

June 22, 1985
7:30 p.m.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED



Larry James

John Whitley

MAY, 1985

MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 11
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The Readers' Seminar

The Annual *Mission Journal* Readers' Seminar is the highlight of the year for those of us engaged in its production and ministry. It is also a time of special fellowship and encouragement for many of our readers and friends. This year it will be held in conjunction with our meeting of the Board of Trustees in Houston, Texas.

Speakers Larry James, of Richardson, Texas, and John Whitley, of Houston, are eminently qualified to address the topic "Have We Overcome?—Reflections on Race Relations in the Churches of Christ": James because of his deep concern for and study of the way Churches of Christ have responded to the social issues of the last twenty-five years; John Whitley because his has been the Black experience in the Churches of Christ.

Larry James, a graduate of Harding Graduate School and New Orleans Baptist Seminary, preaches for the Richardson East Church of Christ. He is a member of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches' Peacemaking Committee. A recent issue of *Mission Journal* was given to his major paper "The Church of Christ and Public Issues" and responses to it.

John Whitley retired last December from the Kashmere Garden Church of Christ in Houston after thirty years of preaching. Prior to his work there he had preached at the Mt. Pleasant Church in Cleveland, Ohio, and been on the Bible faculty at Abilene Christian University. Presently he is involved with his publishing company and bookstore in Houston and has a daily radio program "Pleasant Moments" on a local station. A special interest is cross-cultural meetings and seminars especially designed for white congregations in changing communities.

The evening of June 22, 1985 promises to be one of thoughtful reflection, of new insights and renewed dedication to concerns of justice and love, and of the sharing of feelings and understandings of what it means to be a part of God's Kingdom in the world.

— the Editor

"TO EXPLORE THOROUGHLY THE SCRIPTURES AND THEIR MEANING . . . TO UNDERSTAND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE THE WORLD IN WHICH THE CHURCH LIVES AND HAS HER MISSION . . . TO PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATING THE MEANING OF GOD'S WORD TO OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD."
— EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT, JULY, 1967

CONTENTS **PAGE**

EDITOR **BOBBIE LEE HOLLEY**
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Mission Journal is published monthly by Mission Journal, Inc., 12102 Tanglebriar Cove, Austin, Texas 78750. Annual, $12; three years, $30; annual student and senior citizens, $7.50. Bundle and bound volume rates on request. Single copies $1.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Mission Journal, 12102 Tanglebriar Cove, Austin, TX 78750, which is also the address to be used for circulation and bookkeeping correspondence.

Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome. Those submitted for publication should be submitted in duplicate, double spaced, and typed. Maximum length: ten pages.

Editorial Offices: 1508 Ephesus Church Road, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514. Phone: 919/929-4936.

SCIENCE AND VALUES: CRITIQUE OF A HERITAGE

Our highly advanced technological society has been likened to a body without a spirit; and it threatens to usher us out, not with a whimper, but with a bang.

By NEAL BUFFALOE

Whether you are a scientist, a philosopher, a minister, a homemaker, or a nurse, I am certain that we share at least one common interest, namely, a concern for values. We might disagree profoundly on whether values are objective or subjective, or even on whether certain values are valuable. But few of us look with detachment on a reality voiced by a contemporary ethicist, Otto Bird: "The permissive society has begotten a permissive theory of ethics."

Values have been important in human thought even from the time that *Homo sapiens* emerged as a distinct species. Some of the earliest writings, from a variety of civilizations, attest to such a universal concern. One has only to recall the writings of Confucius, the code of Hammurabi, and the Mosaic law as evidence of this concern. Perhaps it is less clear, historically, that science has exerted a profound influence on our heritage of values; and it is this connection that I wish to explore.

By all accounts, the first successful attempts to formalize scientific thought were made by certain pre-Socratic Greeks, beginning with Thales around 600 B.C. Seeking a coherent explanation of phenomena, these natural-philosophers reacted as a group against the polytheistic metaphysical explanations of their day by embracing a radical framework of materialism. Eventually, it became clear both to some of them and to some of their contemporaries that while their system constituted an intellectual advance, it created an enormous problem: It held no place for values. Thus Socrates, around 400 B.C., reacted to the materialism of the natural-philosophers by holding out for the reality of that which is mental, spiritual, or in some fashion mind-dependent, that is, an idealistic thought-system upholding the reality of objective values.

Intellectual history from that day to this has been largely a story of the tension between materialism (i.e., that ultimate reality is matter in motion) and idealism (i.e., that ultimate reality is mental, spiritual, or in some fashion mind-dependent). Many of the epochal turning points in human thought reflect this tension: the efforts of Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, and other medieval Scholastics to reconcile the faith-reason conflict of their day; Rene Descartes' reaction to the moral pessimism of Thomas Hobbes; Immanuel Kant's celebrated response to the nihilism of David Hume. More recently, the tension has taken other, often more subtle, turns; but there is no question that it remains a problem of the first order in modern thought.

To follow another historical perspective, it is quite revealing to trace the history of Secularism (the "this-worldly," or practical, concerns of human existence) and what I shall term Pietism (the "other-worldly," or sacramental, concerns of human existence). Secularism was the dominant theme in the

Neal Buffaloe, a graduate of David Lipscomb College and Vanderbilt University, is Professor of Biology at the University of Central Arkansas, Conway. He is a past president of the Arkansas Academy of Science and is the author or co-author of six biology textbooks.

ancient Western world, and what passed for science flourished in that atmosphere. The influence of Christianity after the fall of Rome became so pervasive that, as a social philosophy, Pietism gained the ascendency. In fact, it seems fair to say that the Middle Ages began when Pietism outweighed Secularism on the scales of Western social climate; and the Middle Ages ended when the scales tipped in the other direction some eight centuries later. Modern humankind has essentially returned to the secular outlook of the ancient Greeks and, despite certain outward appearances of widespread religious fervor, now shares little of the pietistic outlook of medieval times. Whatever else may be said for the secularistic outlook *or* the pietistic outlook, history tells us that science flourishes in a social atmosphere of Secularism and withers in a social atmosphere of Pietism. History also tells us that Secularism fosters a de-emphasis of values, and herein lies what is undoubtedly the greatest peril of our age. Our highly advanced technological society has been likened to a body without a spirit; and it threatens to usher us out, not with a whimper, but with a bang. We may even take the rest of the living world with us.

We can thus ill afford to conclude from our vantage point as modern secularists, that ours is the best of all possible worlds. The contemporary philosopher W.T. Jones makes this thoughtful observation:

> It can hardly be denied that (the) sacramental point of view was a block to progress—progress in knowledge of how to control the environment and utilize it for this-worldly purposes. To many it seems obvious, now that this viewpoint has disappeared, that men have rid themselves of much that was a liability—ignorance, superstition, intolerance. What is not so obvious is that the modern world has also lost something of value. If the sacramental outlook of the Middle Ages manifested itself here and there in what a modern clinician would describe as acute psychopathology, it also manifested itself in serenity and confidence, in a sense of purpose, meaningfulness, and fulfillment—qualities that the modern clinician looks for in vain among his contemporaries. (*A History of Western Philosophy* [Harcourt Brace & World, Inc. 1096], Vol, 2, p. xix)

In many ways, then, we are squarely back with the ancient Greeks: How can we retain the positive benefits of our scientific and technological heritage—and they are considerable—without rejecting values and value systems? This question is of more than mere academic interest: witness our virtual impotence to ideal with the major social problems of our day, which are essentially problems of values. Additionally, how do we cope with the problems raised by our latter-day mechanistic materialists and disciples of scientism, such as certain of the opinion leaders in sociobiology and behavioristic psychology?

First of all, it might be helpful to see what science is, what it purports to do, and what its limitations are. Essentially, science is a method: a way of organizing data that come to human minds through sense experience. Although there is no simple and pat "scientific method" such as we may have learned in elementary science courses, scientists are united in their basic epistemological approach. As a group, they are enormously successful when dealing with those aspects of reality that can be measured; but they are enormously unsuccessful in attempting to deal with those aspects of reality that lie outside the realm of sense experience. For example, scientists with adequate training and proper instrumentation can measure cosmic radiation or the factors that are necessary for optimum plant growth; and they can engage in purely mental processes such as inductive and deductive reasoning in order to explain natural phenomena and predict their occurrence or recurrence. But they cannot measure love, joy, peace, or religious faith; and they cannot even tell us from their data whether such qualities are good or bad.

Within the American academic community a higher percentage of scientists are practicing churchmen than is the case of scholars in the social sciences and the humanities.

It is rather clear, then, that science cannot deal with problems that concern values. As Bertrand Russell has pointed out, "Science has nothing to say about values . . . . Science can tell us much about the *means* of realizing our desires, but it cannot say that one desire is preferable to another" (*Religion and Science* [Oxford University Press, 1935], p. 175).

This principle has become so much a part of the conventional wisdom of the philosophy of science that it may not be obvious at all that it actually begs an important question. Without wishing to detract in the slightest from its fundamental truth, I believe that in a very real and crucially important sense, science *does* deal with values. Let me explain what I mean.

The *findings* of science are ethically neutral; the *activity* of science is not. To illustrate, biologists have

known with fair precision for some time that a developing fetus will suffer a marked reduction in the number of nerve cells within the central nervous system if inadequate amounts of certain nutrients are supplied by the mother. In other words, malnutrition fosters mental retardation. But these are scientific findings; and despite the sense of pity and even revulsion many of us feel toward these data, they are ethically neutral. Science as science cannot tell us whether we should send food to starving people or attempt to educate potential victims on the objectives of nutrition and birth control. Scientists themselves may attempt to do any or all of these things; but if so, they think and behave in this regard no differently than do other human beings. As Russell says, science can tell us much about the *means* of realizing our desires; but it cannot say that one desire is preferable to another. No matter what the findings of science may be, they are inherently ethically neutral.

However, as already stated, the *activity* of science, as contrasted to its findings, is *not* ethically neutral. For the wording of this distinction and for many of the concepts I shall attempt to develop in its defense, I am indebted to an outstanding physicist and scientific philosopher, the late Jacob Bronowski. I have borrowed freely and shamelessly from him, and most especially from his small book *Science and Human Values* (Harper and Row, 1965).

Modern science had a fairly definite beginning about the middle of the 16th century. There was nothing very new about its methodology, which was borrowed directly from the medieval artisans. There was nothing very new about its philosophy, which was borrowed directly from the medieval theologians. But there was something very new about its *outlook,* i.e., its view of truth. Now, there have always been two ways of looking for truth. One is to find concepts that are beyond challenge, because they are held by faith or by authority or by the conviction that they are self-evident. This is the mystic submission to truth that the East has chosen, and which dominated the thought of medieval scholars. The modern Scientific Revolution began when Copernicus formulated its fundamental outlook: No absolute statement is allowed to be out of reach of the test of conformity to nature. True enough, Copernicus was not the first to underscore the principle; but he was the first to use it in formulating a great scientific conceptual scheme. It is this principle, i.e., insistence on conformity to nature, that Bronowski calls "The Habit of Truth (p. 25).

Scientists, of course, are not the only people who are committed to this concept of truth. The whole of Western scholarship has come to adopt this stance, at least in principle. But I believe it fair to say that scientists are more driven to it by necessity, because they get into trouble more quickly than other scholars when they ignore it. Furthermore, they deal directly with a source of information against which truth may be tested. Science *must* have the habit of truth, *not as a dogma but as a process.*

If truth is to be found, not given, and if, therefore, it is to be tested in action, what other conditions (and with them other values) grow axiomatically from this? There has to be independence of thought, originality, and dissent. In order for these values to exist, there must be freedom and tolerance. No one of these values—independence, originality, dissent, freedom, tolerance—is enough by itself. For example, tolerance alone is not necessarily a virtue. The civilizations of the East, where to contradict is a personal affront, developed no strong science. Dissent alone is not necessarily a virtue. The Soviet pseudobiologist Lysenko dissented totally from Mendelian genetics, and the result was an eclipse of biology in Russia that lasted for over 30 years. I repeat, scientists have no exclusive patent on independence, originality, dissent, freedom, and tolerance (which should, perhaps, be translated "respect"). But to a degree never practiced by any other scholars as a community, science, to quote Bronowski, "confronts the work of one man with that of another, and grafts each on each; and it cannot survive without justice and honor and respect between man and man. Only by these means can science pursue its steadfast object, to explore truth. If these values did not exist, then the society of scientists would have to invent them to make the practice of science possible. In societies where these values did not exist, science has had to create them" (p. 59).

Bronowski continues,

> By the worldly standards of public life, *all* scholars in their work are of course oddly virtuous. They generally do not make wild claims; they do not cheat; they do not try to persuade at any cost; they appeal neither to prejudice nor to authority; they are often frank about their ignorance; their disputes are fairly decorous; they do not confuse what is being argued with race, politics, sex or age; they listen patiently to the young and to the old who both know everything. These are the general virtues of scholarship, and they are peculiarly the virtues of science. Individually, scientists no doubt have human weaknesses. Several of them may have mistresses or read Karl Marx; some of them may even be homosexuals and read Plato. But in a world in which power

> politics and dogmatic theology seem always to threaten, the body of scientists is trained to avoid and organized to resist every form of persuasion but the fact. The values of science thus derive neither from the personal virtues of its members, nor from the finger-wagging codes of conduct by which every profession reminds itself to be good. They have grown out of the practice of science, because they are the inescapable conditions for its practice. (p. 63)

However, it would seem logical that there should be some transference of professional qualities to personal qualities. To repeat, scientists are crucially dependent—more so than other scholars—on the "justice and honor and respect between man and man," as Bronowski puts it. These are precisely the qualities that our great moral teachers have always insisted are the basis for a true religion, regardless of differences in outward form. I find it interesting, if not significant, that within the American academic community a higher percentage of scientists are practicing churchmen than is the case of scholars in the social sciences and the humanities. To say the least, this is a point to ponder for those whose image of the professional scientists is that of a cold, passionless, valueless machine who has rejected the concept of God because his existence cannot be proved.

To recapitulate: Far from being unconcerned with values, science is vitally involved in values. The distinction is in the *findings* of science, which are ethically neutral, and the *activity* of science, which is not. Since both its findings and its activity are an integral part of science, I insist that science as a whole is just as involved with values as any other area of human endeavor. After all, the findings of the sociologist or the original score of the composer are also ethically neutral. As with the scientist, it is in their activities that these scholars get involved with values.

I wish to view the subject of values from yet another perspective. The biological historian Garland Allen maintains that any branch of science undergoes a logical four-stage development. It begins with mysticism, proceeds to vitalism, thence to mechanistic materialism, and finally to holistic materialism *(Life Science in the Twentieth Century* [Cambridge University Press, 1978]). I feel sure that any of my colleagues in science can review mentally the history of their own disciplines, and even their own fields of specialty, and see much truth in Allen's developmental scheme. Let me spell out this concept more fully and more concretely.

Leaving behind for the moment the descriptive, or "what," questions of biology, let us consider the functional, or "how," questions. Primitive humans generally explained such experiences as life, death, and illness by ascribing these phenomena to spiritual entities such as gods or demons, whose actions were considered to be above human understanding. This was, and is, mysticism. In time, mysticism was succeeded by vitalism, the viewpoint that life processes are the result of forces that exist in addition to those forces that are physical and chemical in nature. The essential difference in the vitalist and the mystic is that the vitalist generally conceives these forces to be naturalistic, not super-naturalistic.

After the physical sciences had developed to a point of usefulness, vitalism was succeeded in biology by mechanistic materialism, which holds that all phenomena related to life processes can be explained exhaustively by the laws of physics and chemistry, and that the best understanding of any phenomenon comes from studying the individual parts of it that interact. Operationally, this view is sometimes called reductionism. Eventually, any

Except for some hair-splitting fine points, the outstanding moral, social, and political leaders throughout history have been in very close agreement on the great ethical values.

field of science is inclined to move toward holistic materialism, which still maintains that life phenomena can be explained exhaustively by the laws of physics and chemistry, but that the study of isolated parts is not the most accurate way to comprehend reality. Thus the holist does not deny the importance of parts, but emphasizes the importance of learning how they interact. Of course, this is not always a straight-line progression. For example, developmental biology, molecular biology, and genetics have often shifted back and forth between mechanistic materialism and holistic materialism, depending on the level of the phenomenon being studied. I believe it fair to say, though, with Allen, that in order to reach full maturity, any science must come eventually to the encompassing view of holistic materialism.

In an analogical sense, I believe this is where science—and indeed the whole of society—stands with regard to values. To separate science and values is to stop at mechanistic materialism. To create and espouse a social philosophy that is essentially the counterpart of mechanistic materialism is to abort the development of a mature view of the

nature of humankind and of human destiny. I believe that this is where many sociobiologists and behaviorists, and indeed all thoroughgoing determinists, make a fatal mistake. They seek reductionism, not holism, as the final truth. I would go even further than Allen and declare that science derives its true meaning and value from the totality of human experience, not from its own special viewpoint alone. As I see it, this is an urgent need for biology especially. All problems of human life ultimately are biological ones, and the facts with which the biologist deals should be explored not merely for themselves alone but for the suggestions they may offer for the more complex phenomena of life.

Perhaps, in the end, it is quibbling to argue about the technicalities of values, their relation to science, or anything else about them except their own intrinsic worth. For my own part, I do not care whether values are objective, subjective, opposite, alternate, or whorled; and I must frankly confess that most of these questions are so exasperatingly undecidable that I cannot maintain an interest in them. Perhaps this says more about the limitations of my mind than about the legitimacy of the questions. Nevertheless, I suspect that for most of us our time is better spent attempting to exemplify in our own lives and instill in other lives those values that are well-nigh universally approved by people of good intent, regardless of the nature or the origin of these values. And it seems to me that if there is validity in Otto Bird's statement that the permissive society has begotten a permissive theory of ethics, we should all be concerned.

Essentially, this takes us back to Socrates, who started with the axiom that good is better than evil, truth better than falsity, loyalty better than disloyalty, bravery better than cowardice, knowledge better than ignorance. (I used to like arguing with a couple of philosopher friends that Socrates was really no smarter than Mammy Yokum, of the late Li'l Abner comic strip, who would periodically vanquish one Evil-eye Fleegle and then ascribe her victory to the fact that "goodness is better than badness, because it's nicer.") In fact, except for some hair-splitting fine points, the outstanding moral, social, and political leaders throughout history have been in very close agreement on the great ethical values. And intuitively (although I believe that this intuition derives essentially from precept and example), most serious-minded people are in fair agreement. To illustrate: in my course on Human Sexuality I generally close out the class with a discussion of sexual ethics. One approach I sometimes take is to ask, "How many of you believe forcible rape to be morally wrong?" Of course, I get a total show of hands. Then I ask, "*Why* is it wrong?" Perhaps the most frequent spontaneous answer I get is simply, "Because it *is*." My point is not that this is an adequate answer—we generally proceed to analyze the question further—but that there is not a great deal of serious disagreement on certain fundamental values. It's a bit like the young lady who wrote in an essay on gun control for one of my English-teaching friends, "Just because John Wilkes Booth owned a handgun, he thought that gave him a right to kill President John F. Kennedy." Her heart, if not her history, was surely in the right place.

While I hope I have argued effectively for a proper relationship between science and values, my major concern as a teacher is really more for values than for science as such. But because I feel strongly that science is inextricably interwoven with values, I believe that the scientist teaches values continuously. Now, I hope not to be misunderstood on this point. If the teacher-scientist—or any other member of a university faculty—uses his lectern as a pulpit to preach his own brand of values, or any brand of values, he acts dishonestly. What is more, students view this as dishonest, even though they may prefer momentarily to run rabbits than to cope with difficult subject matter. Evangelism for its own sake is not only dishonest, but self-defeating for the evangelist. The values of which I have spoken—independence of thought, originality, the right to dissent, freedom, tolerance, justice, honor, respect—are best taught as any other truths are taught: by example.

What I am urging is, of course, a religious viewpoint, for which I offer no apology. However, I use the term "religious" not in the narrow, parochial sense, but in the broadest historical sense, as in this statement by Alfred North Whitehead from his classic *The Aims of Education:*

> We can be content with no less than the old summary of educational ideal which has been current at any time from the dawn of our civilization. The essence of education is that it be religious.
>
> Pray, what is religious education?
>
> A religious education is an education which inculcates duty and reverence. Duty arises from our potential control over the course of events. Where attainable knowledge could have changed the issue, ignorance has the guilt of vice. And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity. (The Macmillan Company, 1929)

SCIENCE AND FAITH: IS THE KINGDOM DIVIDED?

"The materialists have had their long innings of arrogance. Their beliefs have worn out. They lead us nowhere. Materialism gives you a hopeless, empty life, one without values. Values are spiritual things, giving primacy to love, courage and compassion."

By THOMAS A. LANGFORD

Editor's note: This paper (slightly edited for ***Mission****) has been given before a number of student groups.*

Many people feel that science and faith are incompatible. I want to speak to the confusion many young people feel as they listen to conflicting arguments on evolution, special creation, and cosmic origins. I do not have all the answers, but of some things I am pretty sure. My confidence comes from at least three sources: (1) the revelation of God in Scripture, (2) secular education, and (3) personal experience. I do not see these three sources as entirely separate, but rather as three aspects of my education, integrated through time and reflection into a foundation for meaning and behavior.

It is my conviction that apparent conflicts between faith and higher learning have been created by irresponsible teaching on the part of both church and school, or more particularly, by both preachers and professors. Some preachers have implied that all scientists are atheists and therefore enemies of spiritual truth. Of course, that's not so. On the other hand, some professors tend to suggest that all churchmen are either ignorant or hypocritical. And, of course, that's not so.

The truth generally lies between two extremes. In Acts 28 the account is given of Paul's shipwreck off the coast of Malta. Arriving on shore, Paul and others began to gather sticks for a fire, to dispel the cold. A snake came out of the sticks and bit Paul's hand. The native saw this and concluded hastily that Paul was a murderer who, though rescued from drowning, was now being overcome by the justice of the gods. But Paul shook the snake into the fire and came to no harm. The natives then changed their talk and said that he was a god, able to withstand the serpent's bite. Both of these conclusions were wrong in the extreme. Paul was neither a murderer nor a god, he was just a man. The truth lay between the extremes. Much of the confusion in the world today relative to science and faith is the consequence of such extremes, presented by people who know less than they should about what they are saying.

There is indeed a science of which we should beware. Millions of people are caught up in it. It is mentioned by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of science falsely so called." Some of what passes for science is merely scientism: authoritative sounding balderdash. There are also false religious systems which have the appearance of devotion and piety, but which bear no approval of God and truth. Paul discusses such false religion in Colossians 2; Jesus deals with it in Matthew 15:8-9. These are opposing extremes; the truth lies somewhere between.

Let me make a strong statement which, if accepted as true, should banish all fear that faith may have of science: *There can be no conflict between science and God's spiritual truth.* Any conflict

Thomas A. Langford is professor of English and Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Texas Tech University.

must be only apparent, not real, or the result of the perversion or distortion of science or religion. Let me explain why I know this is true. The word science is from a root which means "to know." Science is knowledge. Anything that is known is true; if it is not true, it cannot create knowledge. The field of learning called science deals with what can be studied, classified, discovered, and replicated. It is true that science deals in hypotheses and theories, but only as a means to an end, as a method of arriving at truth, fact or law. Hypothesis and theory are part of what we call the scientific method; but they are only the means to knowledge, not knowledge itself. They are not in themselves science.

On the one hand, many professors, leaving their proper role of searchers after natural truth and enjoying the role of sensational scientism, exaggerate the truth. On the other, many Christians with only a superficial knowledge of the Bible and history draw conclusions that cannot be justified by deeper study.

The same is true of religion. Interpretation and opinion are important processes for every thinking person. It is only natural that, reading our Bibles and trying to apply God's word to our own experience, we have unanswered questions. There are parts of the Bible we don't understand. We are so made that, having some truth, we want more. Hence, we reason, reflect, and carry on dialogue. We develop theories and tentative conclusions. These may be means to truth, but they are not truth itself. Some religionists get caught up in the process, in the search, and mistake theory for truth. Like those Paul speaks of, they are "ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."

We can see how both science and religion are subject to distortion, to extremes. It is here that our conflict arises. Take the subject of evolution, for instance. No thinking man denies that evolution occurs. Evolution means change and change is the constant of life. But Darwinian evolution is something more. Darwin hit upon the idea, the hypothesis, that the change which he observed all around him, especially on that famous voyage aboard the Beagle, could be drafted for use to explain the origin and interconnectedness of all life. As he observed, his hunch passed from hypothesis to theory; and a beautiful theory it was. It has been so useful, in fact, that the world has largely sacrificed alternative routes to truth—including special creation—and crystalized its research and systematics around the theory. The three cardinal parts of Darwin's theory were time, natural selection, and mutation of the species. Darwin's book of 1859, *The Origin of the Species,* artfully systematized ideas that had been current for decades. While the work generated some controversy, it was not until Darwin's second great book, *The Descent of Man,* (1871) that the general public began to see the full implications of Darwinian evolution as applied to man. Some people welcomed these theories, as a means of explaining human origins. Others rejected them, because they saw they were opposed to the prevailing Christian belief in special creation.

The acceptance of Darwinian evolution by so many scientists reflected a great change of Western thought. That change was called, interestingly, "The Enlightenment." Toward the end of the eighteenth century there was a radical departure from the faith of ages past. Many intellectuals came to assume that it was no longer feasible to believe the simple Bible account of human origin, that it was necessary to reject all supernatural accounts and to accept only those explanations that could be verified by natural means. But until Darwin there was no systematic description of human development by natural means. The Bible account had been rejected but no satisfactory theory was there to take its place. When Darwin's theory was presented, it filled the gap. The theory was taken up so enthusiastically and universally that alternative explanations came to be regarded as "unscientific."

To hear some modern scientists one would think that there was no science before Darwin. But of course that is not so. Modern science really finds its origin with Bacon in the seventeenth century. It actually grew out of man's reverence for God and the universe he created. During the Renaissance, that golden period of learning and art at the beginning of the seventeenth century, science and theology were not divided. They were two ways of searching for the one truth. Renaissance man believed there were two books of God: the Bible was the book of God's words; nature was the book of God's works. They took seriously David's marvelous poem:

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
Yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
Psalm 19:1-4

Scientists at that time expected their research into the natural world to confirm and elaborate the spiritual truths of the Bible. Although by modern standards they had much to learn about nature and the power of the scientific method, there was a unity and purpose to their quest that largely has been lost by many modern scientists. They believed in the Great Architect behind the universe and their research into his handiwork was a labor of love and reverence. In fact, many of the greatest scientists of these earlier times were also well-known theologians. The scholar who knew the book of God's words could quite naturally be expected to have the advantage in the study of that other book, the book of God's works.

However, the Enlightenment with its rejection of supernaturalism changed all that. A way had to be found to make science independent of theology, free from all assumptions that depended on an unseen, non-material force. Nineteenth-century men like Chambers, Lyell, Wallace, and Darwin seemed to provide this independent way to account for the universe and its infinite variety. Since then, with some notable exceptions, the scientific world has passionately committed itself to this independent route. Indeed we might say that evolution, from Darwin through its various developments, has become religious truth for much of the world. Not only in scientific papers, but in newspapers, literature and art, the theory has been accepted as dogma; and no one dares to question it without risking scorn and laughter.

All of this is true partly because men insisted that nothing would be accepted as true that couldn't be scientifically verified, that is, by observation and analysis in the scientist's laboratory. Because spiritual truth was rejected, or at least all that could not be discovered by "scientific" methods, some explanation had to be found that would rely only on observable natural or material causes. Darwin was adopted, and for over one hundred years all of science has been affected by a theory that still waits for verification and proof. Now, however, many reputable scientists are saying that because of Darwin, and more particularly the unscientific faith that men have vested in the Darwinian theory, we have gone down a blind alley from which it will take generations to recover.

But we can take heart from the many current evidences that rethinking is occuring. For example, Robert Jastrow, professor of geology and astronomy at Columbia University, has written a number of highly regarded books on evolution. In *God and the Astronomers* he describes a crisis in modern astronomy and concludes as follows:

> For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.

This is not to say that Jastrow or others I will quote no longer believe in evolution. It is just that many are coming to see that classical Darwinism does not provide a satisfactory account of human origins. As Norman Macbeth says in his book *Darwin Retried,* "The mechanism of evolution suggested by Charles Darwin has been found inadequate by the professionals and . . . they have moved on to other views and problems. In brief, classical Darwinism is no longer considered valid by qualified biologists." In fact, the whole field of human origins is perhaps more open to study today than at any time in the past one hundred years.

In November of 1982 four Nobel Prize winning scientists and two theologians were brought together in Dallas for a conference on the topic "The Convergence of Science and Religion." The first of these speakers, Ilya Prigogine, is a chemist from the University of Texas at Austin. He argued that we are on the threshold of a new era of exchange between science and philosophy, an era he called "the greatest scientific revolution since the Renaissance." Because of the discovered complexities of nature and the inability of science to account for them in purely mechanistic terms, he says that "the distinction between the sacred and profane is becoming more difficult. Today, nature is becoming transcendent."

Some of the theories that generated the conflict between religion and science are now being questioned, so that dialogue between open-minded Christians and scientists can once again occur.

Another participant, British physicist Brian Josepheson, called for a stop to "this contraction which stops one from being a human being when one is being a scientist. Mysticism deals with the roots of reality. Science deals with its branches. If scientists were to examine the nature of God, what would come out is a confirmation and clarification of what the mystics have already said."

Sir John Eccles, whose Nobel prize was won for

research in neurophysiology, argued openly for a science that recognizes the divine element. "The materialists have had their long innings of arrogance. Their beliefs have worn out. They lead us nowhere. Materialism gives you a hopeless, empty life, one without values. Values are spiritual things, giving primacy to love, courage and compassion." He concluded with the statement that "each of us is a unique, conscious being, a divine creation. It is the religious view. It is the only view consistent with all the evidence." (This conference was reported in the May/June issue of *The Texas Humanist,* 1983).

These comments and this conference constitute only a small part of the growing evidence that new approaches are being taken in scientific circles. Sir Fred Hoyle, one of Britain's most distinguished physicists, has recently published *The Intelligent Universe,* one of a series of books that challenge traditional or classical views of evolution. He says quite positively that natural selection is simply not an adequate theory to explain the origins of the universe. His work in Astronomy has rocked the world of traditional physics.

Another recent book, published by a major secular press, provides a new challenge to dominant theories of chemical origins of life on earth. Billed as the first study to be released by a recognized scholarly publisher that shows the scientific community the reasonableness of special creation, it examines, with what appears to me to be great scholarly integrity, all of the major notions of chemical origins and shows how in the final analysis each is defective. Then in an excellent epilogue the authors show how a greater tolerance for metaphysical thinking can throw new light on research and render meaningful and logical what otherwise remains shrouded in mystery. The book, *The Mystery of Life's Origins,* is by Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen, who hold doctorates in Chemistry, Engineering and Geochemistry. I suspect this is a book that will cause some stir in scientific circles.

I am not, by any means, claiming that all of these scientists have been converted to Christ and now share our Christian world view. I am saying that some of the theories that generated the conflict between religion and science are now being questioned, so that dialogue between open-minded Christians and scientists can once again occur. And I am saying that our Christian faith in the divine origin of man is nothing of which to be ashamed. You may still hear some scoffing professors whose narrow world has not yet opened up to what is happening, but you needen't get upset by that. It is the best part of your education to have to sift and select, weigh and choose. An education that provides no such challenge is hardly worthy of the name.

There are, of course, many outstanding scientists who are also evangelical Christians. They are helping to create the dialogue which can overcome the conflict of the past. One of these is Donald Mackay, a British specialist in brain physiology who teaches at Keele University. I like what he said in a recent interview in *Christianity Today:* "I hope that in God's providence we can yet win through to the sort of harmony there was three centuries ago when modern science was founded in the days of the first Royal Society members. I really believe that in my children's generation, if not in mine, that kind of harmony can be restored." There may not be too much you and I can do to bring all of this about, at least so far as the larger world is concerned. But there is much that we can do in our own circles. And that's what I want to talk about in conclusion.

The kingdom is not divided. Science is not the enemy of our faith, and no truth of science is in any way in conflict with spiritual truth. I want you to accept that as an unshakable fact. Wherever there is conflict, either the "scientific truth" is merely supposed truth or the "spiritual truth" is distorted. The book of God's works does not oppose the book of his words. The lesson we need to learn is one of humility. Most of the problems between faith and science come from a cocksure dogmatism and an argumentative assertiveness. Those attitudes do not well reflect the disciple (learner) character of followers of Jesus. They are brittle and liable to break under stress. No one worries me more than the assertive young student who has all the answers and is eager to argue with his "atheist professor." I know he is headed for trouble: not because he will be bested by his "prof," for most of the professors I know are pretty tolerant and/or good-natured. His dogmatism and lack of humility will get him, if not this year or with this professor, then the next. None of us can well afford to be too cocky or feel that God's truth needs our special defense. This of course does not mean we must always remain silent. There will be times when it will be appropriate to speak, quietly but firmly, of our faith. It will sometimes be appropriate to raise respectful questions. But the young student should ordinarily remember his role of learner. One part of that role is to weigh and discriminate between the wheat and the chaff, between truth and opinion.

There will be times when you want to argue. I remember the time that my biology "prof" told us that the earth was 2.9 billion years old. One of my fellow students questioned, "How can that be true? The Bible says it's only 6,000 years old." To that the professor replied, "I just don't happen to believe the Bible." Then after a shocked silence, he went on to

say, "Besides, the Bible doesn't say that." This incident illustrates the point I am trying to make: The conflicts are not between science and faith, but between distortions of each.

On the one hand, many professors, leaving their proper role of searchers after natural truth and enjoying the role of sensational scientism, exaggerate the truth. On the other, many Christians with only a superficial knowledge of the Bible and history draw conclusions that cannot be justified by deeper study. It was Bishop Ussher, not Moses, who established the 6,000 year chronology. It does not account for the time before the formation of the earth in the six days of Genesis, when all was "without form and void." Nor does it deal with the very real question of the length of God's creative days in Genesis. We just don't know how much of the biblical language is literal and how much of it is what we call "accommodative," i.e., the truth told in terms that even a child can understand. When the language of the Bible is not absolutely specific, I prefer to remain open—harmonizing it with what *is* known and specific from science. I assure you that such an approach is not only possible, it is intellectually honest and educationally gratifying. We just do not have to act adamantly certain where God's word leaves us freedom to learn, to grow, and to respect others who hold differing opinions.

Many of you will run across pompous persons who wish to appear more knowledgeable than their learning justifies—among both skeptical teachers *and* professing Christians. An example of the former was the same professor I mentioned before. He told us of the great progress of science during his lifetime. "When I was your age," he said, "scientists said the earth was 2 million years old. Now we know it is 2.9 billion years old." Skeptical, I asked him, "Professor Schoenberg, if your concept of the earth's age can change that much in thirty years, what assurance do we have that it won't change that much or more, one direction or the other, in the next thirty years?" He replied, "Now we know. We're sure." Here thirty years later, scientists are still changing their minds on the issue. My professor's careless dogmatism was no more justified than the unreasonable rigidity of many preachers and other Christians who rush forward to "defend the faith."

I remind you again of the meaning of the word "disciple." It means "learner." Nothing characterizes the Christian believer better than humility before God's great books—Nature and Revelation. As learners we keep seeking where the absolute facts are not yet all in. In humility, we stand in awe before nature, marveling at God's artistry and power, absorbing the knowledge he offers us, from one golden sunrise to another. In humility, we sit at the feet of Jesus the Incarnate Word, as he teaches us spiritual truth from faith unto faith. In eager confidence, we study both Books, knowing that the Author is One and that nothing he writes in one can contradict what he displays in the other.

As Christians we have a great advantage in our educational pursuits, for we not only search for truth, we have come to know personally the Author of all truth. It is our Father who made the worlds, and to study his handiwork is to know more of him. A great theologian of the past generation was especially known for his insistence that "all knowledge begins with God." Since I first read that many years ago, I have never been able to forget it. As I teach and research in a state university setting, I respect and honor the principle of separation of church and state. But I wonder sometimes how much further our scientific research would be advanced if all scientists believed, as they once did, this principle stated by Cornelius Van Til. I know that science has come far, especially in its theoretical and technical aspects; but what about the more humane, life-enhancing aspects? We know that crime, broken homes, international conflict do not suggest that our vaunted knowledge has carried us very far in human relations. The problem, I fear, is that too many of our researchers have missed the most important factor of all, the factor that would unite and give meaning to all of our complex data, i.e., that "all knowledge begins with God."

We need the lesson taught by John Henry Newman over one hundred years ago. In his *Idea of A University* he argued that all knowledge is one. Various disciplines—biology, physics, geology, psychology, etc.—merely provide different windows on truth. The truth is written in the stars, but it is also written in a blade of grass, or a molecule of water. Whatever the field of study, the data leads to God. As Tennyson wrote,

> *Flower in the crannied wall,*
> *I pluck you out of the crannies,*
> *I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,*
> *Little flower—but* ***if*** *I could understand*
> *What you are, root and all, and all in all,*
> *I should know what God and man is.*

So my message to you is, be avid students of God's books. Treat them both with reverence and care, as instruments to aid you in your search for knowledge of God and man. You need not fear science; just be discriminating enough to recognize the difference between science and scient*ism*—"science falsely so called." Love the Lord and cultivate your faith. Your parents' faith will not suffice for you. You must come

(continued on p. 18)

Doctrinal Reflections

The Redemption of the Body

If a Christian's body is not holy, he or she is not holy at all. He or she relates to God as a whole, body and soul; or there is no relation at all.

By LYNN E. MITCHELL, JR.

When we speak of redemption in Christianity, we must be clear as to what is being redeemed and from what we are being redeemed. Redemption simply means the release from slavery, by a "Redeemer" who has paid the manumission price. What is being redeemed depends on what has been enslaved. The usual religious view is that there has been an enslavement of an invisible immortal substance (the "soul") by a visible, mortal substance ("matter" and the material body). This, basically, is the assumption of religions from Buddhism to Platonism. Whether "matter" is viewed as illusion (Buddhism) or non-being (Platonism), it is not the stuff which, according to the Hebrew-Biblical view, has been created by God and is "good."

Whatever "matter" is, in Judaeo-Christian thought it is the stuff out of which "creation" is made, whereas in most philosophical religions it is the stuff of the "fall." If the basic component of creation is considered somehow "good" in our tradition and "not good' in another tradition, it would seem that the issue is clear. The fact is that the issue is not clear and has not been clear in the history of Christianity. This lack of clarity is due largely to the confusion of these two traditions.

Two World Views

Using the Judaeo-Christian rubrics of "Creation," "Fall," and "Redemption," the following is a simple outline comparing the Hebrew-Biblical view of the world with the Greek-Oriental-Philosophical view of things:

> In Hebrew-Biblical thought Creation is Good; the Fall is the Distortion of Creation; and Redemption is Redemption of Creation.
>
> In Greek-Philosophical thought Creation is Not Good; the Fall is Creation Itself; and Redemption is Redemption from Creation.

Comparing very complex systems of thought in this fashion is not a good way to study Comparative Religion, but it does enable us to speak in a simple way about the implications of two basically different world views. If matter is illusory or not good, then what we Christians call "Creation" must be illusory or not good. Among things that are "not good," then, we must include the body, the sexual, the sensual. It follows that the fall was a fall *into* creation, *into* bodiliness, *into* sexuality and sensuality. Redemption, then, means redemption *from* creation, *from* the body, and *from* sexuality and sensuality.

Plato's characterization of the body as "the prison for the soul" illustrates this view of life in the world. Various religious philosophies which were popular in the early Christian centuries were even more ex-

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treme in their world-denying (anti-Creation) tendencies. Plato attributed "creation" to the unfortunate mixing of being with non-being ("spirit" with "matter"); others attributed the creation of matter to the evil principle of the universe (Manichaeism) or to a stupid, inferior diety (Gnosticism).

Either way, the body and its sensual pleasures get credit for all human problems. The goal of human life is redemption, but it is redemption *from* the body. Both asceticism and libertinism resulted from these anti-body theologies. Asceticism attempts to participate in redemption by depriving the body of its natural, sensual joys and, sometimes, by punishing the body for daring to involve the spirit in the sensual. Libertinism resulted when the destiny of the spirit was so separated from the destiny of the body that it made no difference what the "body" did.

The doctrine of creation which Jesus Christ affirms in his coming, his dying, and his resurrection, as we have seen, can hardly be compatible with the views of Plato, Mani, or the Gnostics. Yet some of our funeral sermons, moral tracts, and pious otherworldly pronouncements sound as if his positive view of creation and his hopeful expectation of its redemption have been rejected for the more ecumenical view described above. Our good Christian bodies have become "prisons for the soul"; and sex, God's good gift, has been linked in our minds with bad things (e.g., in such expressions as "sex and violence"—as if these were similar kinds of things). Heaven is pictured as a place where we are finally released from our bodies and rescued from our sensual enjoyments. No wonder so many of our young people prefer good, honest, natural paganism.

God's Good Creation

How preferable, and more compatible with the propensities of Jesus Christ, is the Hebrew-Biblical model. In this model Creation is good: God made it on purpose. The fall is not a fall into God's creation, but a distortion of God's good creation. Redemption, then, is not redemption from creation, but a redemption *of* creation.

It is creation which has been enslaved. My body is not the slave-master; it is the victim. The human body is very important in Hebrew-Biblical thought, both in reality and in symbol. My body is "me," in Hebrew thought. It is not an appendage to me, which can be safely dispensed with. God formed me from the dust of the earth, breathed into my nostrils the breath of life, and I became a living being. I do not *have* a soul; I *am* a soul—*and* a body.

Whereas crypto-Platonists among Christians tend to use "soul" to talk about the real me, *the Bible unhesitatingly uses "body" to represent the real me, the whole me.* We tend to invite potential converts to give their "souls" to God, whereas the Bible invites them to present their bodies to God as their spiritual worship (Rom. 12:1). If a Christian's body is not holy, he or she is not holy at all. He or she relates to God as a whole, *body and soul;* or there is little relation at all.

The Wholeness of Redemption

Paul's beautiful celebration of redemption hope in Romans 8:18-25 is a profound summary of the relation among Creation, Fall, and Redemption. Though an emotional favorite of many of us, this creation-affirming theological aspect of the passage has been hardly touched upon among our people.

The passage may be paraphrased as follows:

> The reality of our suffering in this present age is a problem. But the significance of this reality pales before the significance of the transcendent glory we are destined to experience because of Christ.
>
> *Think of it:* Creation, the very context in which our present suffering takes place, is eagerly and longingly awaiting this experience of glory along with us. For Creation is a victim. It has suffered under the curse of emptiness and vanity, not because it wanted to, but because God willed that it share our cursed lot so that it might also share our glorious destiny. We are creatures. Creation has always been and will always be the context of our existence—the staging area of our worship of God. It has suffered with us in our fall; it must now be made new so that it may obtain with us glorious freedom from bondage to death.
>
> So we and our created retinue have been suffering together, suffering the kind of pain an expectant mother suffers in anticipation of birth. We children of God are first to begin to experience being born anew. But we still groan as the rest of creation does as we wait for the adoption procedure to be completed, as we wait the culmination of our destinies—the redemption of our bodies.
>
> What, then, is to be redeemed? It is I and everything about me. It is all of which I consist and everything that makes up the context in which I exist. All of this is symbolized in the expressions "New Creation" and "Redemption of the Body." Not just my "soul," but my body, my mind, my emo-

(continued on p. 18)

Baptism: Unity or Diversity?

By JOHN MARK HICKS

In the January, 1984 issue of *Mission Journal*, pages 17-19, there appeared an article by Scott Colglazier entitled "Many Baptisms." While I appreciate some of the things which were said, I find myself in fundamental disagreement with my brother. In this short article, I wish to raise several points which were overlooked or misunderstood.

1. While there are antecedents to Christian Baptism, the New Testament clearly draws a significant distinction between previous washings and Christian immersion. Whether we seek the origins of Christian Baptism in Jewish proselyte baptism (whose beginning date is highly disputed),[1] Qumran washings (whose differences from Christian Baptism mitigate against any significant influence),[2] Greco-Roman mystical washings (whose dates are also highly disputed),[3] or John's baptism, the New Testament draws our attention to significant differences between them and Christian immersion. In Hebrews 6:1-2 the writer argues that the foundation of Christian conversion involves an understanding of "baptisms" *(baptismon)*. The same term is used to describe the Old Testament priestly lustrations in Hebrews 9:10. I think the point is simply that in order to become a disciple of Jesus the candidate must understand the difference between his immersion and other immersions which were practiced at that time. In particular, this would include the Old Testament lustrations, Judaistic washings, and John's baptism. Acts 19:1-7 has the function of demonstrating that John's baptism was no longer considered valid in the post-Resurrection Kingdom.

Mr. Colglazier's point that there was a diversity of antecedents to Christian immersion is well-taken. The point that he failed to underline, however, is that the New Testament itself radically distinguishes between these antecedents (only three are visible in the New Testament itself: John's baptism, Old Testament lustrations and Judaistic rituals) and that immersion which initiates one into the Church in the post-Resurrection setting. Indeed, one of the elementary teachings of Christ is the understanding of this distinction, e.g., "teachings about baptisms" (Heb. 6:1-2).

2. There is no substantial diversity of baptismal practice in the New Testament. While there were probably different verbal formulas used in reference to the practice of immersion, there is no biblical evidence of them. Mr. Colglazier calls attention to the difference between Baptism "in the name of Jesus" (Acts 8:16; 19:5) and Baptism in "the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). While this is a difference in terminology, it is not a distinction of meaning. These three texts all use the same preposition *eis* which denotes a movement into fellowship with or coming into the possession of. It is synonymous with Baptism *eis* Christ (Gal. 3:37; Rom. 6:3). The name of Jesus may easily stand in the place of the Trinity since he is the fullness of diety in the flesh (Col. 2:9). The texts do not indicate a liturgical formula, but rather speak to the meaning of the act. One is simply an abbreviation of the other.

The other two texts where the name of Jesus is connected with Baptism are Acts 2:38 and 10:48. The former text uses the preposition *epi* (upon) and may reflect the practice of confession as in the verb "to call upon" (*epikaleo* in Acts 2:21 and 22:16). The latter text uses the preposition *en* (in) which simply means by the authority of the name which is invoked (as in I Cor. 6:11; Col. 3:17). It is possible that *epi* and *en* are used synonymously as in Mark 9:39, 41. In every case, the terms do not refer to what was said at the administration of the Baptism (i.e., they

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are not reflections of practice), but refer either to the authority of the Baptism or its meaning. There is no diversity in substance here.

3. There is no real diversity of baptismal understanding in the New Testament except what is condemned. It must be stressed that different terminology does not imply a difference in meaning. Paul may speak of being baptized "into Christ" (Rom. 6:3), or being baptized "into his body" (I Cor. 12:13), or "putting on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). A baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; cf. 22:16) and a baptism by which we are saved (Titus 3:5; I Pet. 3:21), or justified (I Cor. 6:11), or sanctified (Eph. 5:27) are simply divergent ways of expressing what is essentially the same truth. It is more accurate to say that there are many different perspectives from which to view Baptism than to state that there is a diversity of understanding in the New Testament. The New Testament shares the same view of Baptism though it may be couched in different terminology.

4. The diverse misunderstandings of Baptism which are present in the New Testament are condemned. Mr. Colglazier calls our attention to the diversity of understanding of Baptism in Corinth. There can be little doubt that this diversity existed. The point, however, is that this kind of diversity was condemned in the context of I Corinthians. In fact, Paul emphasizes the unity of their Baptism in order to undermine that false diversity (cf. I Cor. 1:13ff; 6:9-11; 12-13). Just as they had all received the same Spirit, so they had all received the same Baptism which was a Baptism "into the name of Christ" or "into one body." Paul argues that they had, in fact, received the same Baptism; and therefore they ought to be one people. It seems clear to me that this diversity was not tolerated by Paul and neither should we tolerate it. Paul's letter was a corrective to their misunderstanding of Baptism. We also need to approach the biblical text to correct our own misunderstandings as well as those of our neighbors.

5. Baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are bound together in Scripture. I do not affirm that Baptism and the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit are bound together. Miraculous power came to Cornelius before baptism (Acts 10), but to the Samaritans (Acts 8) and the Ephesians (Acts 19) through the laying on of hands after their baptisms. However, one cannot equate a miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit with the presence of the indwelling Spirit which is given to every Christian (Rom. 8:9). If this were the case, then the Samaritans would not have been Christians prior to the coming of Peter and John through whose hands they received a miraculous manifestation of the Spirit. The Samaritains were true children of God before Peter and John arrived, and consequently they already possessed the personal presence of the Spirit.

There is no record, however, that anyone receives this indwelling of the Spirit without obedience to the Gospel. In many passages the work of the Spirit is joined to Baptism without whom it is not a new birth (John 3:5; I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5; Acts 2:38). The Spirit is promised to all who obey God (Acts 5:32). Certainly God is not in himself bound to an earthly institution; but in terms of our Covenant document, the New Testament, God has bound himself to an institution, namely, Baptism, through which his Spirit regenerates and applies the work of redemption. Consequently, I am bound to expound it in the way that the Covenant document, to which I am bound, offers it. The distribution of the Spirit is not arbitrary ("to whomever and whenever he pleases"), it is convenantal. The Spirit of God is free only insofar as he has not bound himself by covenant.

6. The foundation of Christian unity is the convenantal act of Baptism. Ephesians 4:5 (a reference notably absent from Mr. Colglazier's article) simply states that just as there is one faith and one body, so also there is "one Baptism." That affirmation is fundamental to Christian unity. There can be no diversity of substance in reference to this teaching of the New Testament. Certainly we may use diversities of liturgical formulas; but the mode of administration, the faith of the candidate and meaning of the institution are not open for diversification. How is it possible to unite Christendom if we permit the diversification of what the New Testament maintains is essentially "one"? Indeed, how can we diversify the means by which we are, in fact, made "one" in Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)? Just as we cannot faithfully maintain a diversity of Lords, neither can we faithfully maintain a diversity of baptisms.

While we must, as Mr. Colglazier suggests, always approach the topic of Baptism with a humbleness of mind and receptivity of spirit, it must be maintained that one cannot compromise the essential teaching of the New Testament on this foundational theme. To do otherwise is not only to reverse our restoration heritage, but it is to undermine the authority of Scripture itself. ***MISSION***

NOTES

[1]See Derwood Smith, "Jewish Proselyte Baptism and the Baptism of John," *Restoration Quarterly* 25.1 (1982), pp.

(continued on p. 18)

BOOKS

Lost In The Cosmos: The Last Self-Help Book

By Walker Percy. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983. (Paperback, Washington Square Press, 1984)

Reviewed By LEONARD ALLEN

Walker Percy and I have at least one thing in common: We are both fed up with the glut of pop self-help books that litter the Walden bookshops and food store newstands, that regularly infect the best-seller lists, and that purvey the narcissistic incantations of the twentieth-century cult of the "self." As George F. Will observed,"To visit a bookstore today is to feel misgivings about universal literacy, which has produced a mass market for hundreds of profoundly sad handbooks on achieving happiness." From the benign prescriptions of *How to be Your Own Best Friend* to the crude egocentrism of Robert Ringer's *Looking Out for Number One*, this modern literary genre offers exuberant and unrestrained paens to the god of the self, an offering made possible by the rise, since the Enlightenment, of the notion of the sovereign and autonomous consciousness, free to pursue its own way in the world without God. Leading guru Wayne Dyer puts it simply for his faithful catechumens: "Using yourself as a guide and not needing the approval of an outside force is the most religious experience you can have" *(Your Erroneous Zones, p. 68)*. Here, self-fulfillment becomes the ultimate concern, self-indulgence the primary spiritual exercise. Book royalties, of course, replace the old collection plates and keep these evangelists in business.

With a devilish and delightful mixture of sardonic wit, philosophical sophistication, imaginative fiction, and literary grace, Walker Percy pokes fun at this "religious" preoccupation with the self. Beneath the fun and lampoons, however, is a biting satire and baleful existentialism that teeters occasionally on the edge of rage at the shallowness and deadness of the age. For Percy, the problem of the "self" in a post-Enlightenment world is no joke. There is widespread alienation, depression, despair, and suicide in modern Western society; and it comes—strangely, paradoxically—at a time when scientific accomplishment has reached a zenith, when technology dazzles the mind with a rush of comforts, cures, and conveniences. "How is it possible," Percy asks, with tongue only a tiny bit in cheek, "for the man who designed Voyager 19, which arrived at Titania, a satellite of Uranus, three seconds off schedule and a hundred yards off course after a flight of six years, to be one of the most screwed-up creatures in California—or the Cosmos?" Percy's answer makes up the heart of his book: The rise of the modern scientific consciousness—with its marvelous ability to explain the natural world, yet its inability to explain the human self—has left a terrible void, a void once filled by myth and religion; as a result, the self no longer has the means to "know itself" and thus is "lost in the cosmos," trapped in its own mechanical creation.

A reader familiar with the whole of Percy's work will recognize these themes. The satirical denunciation of this "scientific humanism," as he calls it, began in his first novel, *The Moviegoer* (1961), and continued in later novels such as *Love in the Ruins* (1971), *Lancelot* (1977), and *The Second Coming* (1980). Influenced deeply by the works of existentialists Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard, which he read during a long period of convalescence in the 1940s, Percy rejected his serene faith in science and launched upon a passionate quest for truth. His quest led him, in 1947, to convert to the Catholic faith. The religious vision growing out of that early crisis underlies all of his writings. Faith, he believes, is possible only when one can begin to see, as Percy learned from Kierkegaard, that the self is slippery and self-deceptive and needs to be grounded in the reality of God. The image of God in the self takes shape, he argued in his collection of philosophical essays *The Message in the Bottle* (1975), with the gift of language. Self-estrangement is relieved when,

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with the ability to use words as signs, one rises above mere animality and becomes a creature capable of sadness and joy, memory and hope, damnation and blessedness. The aim of Percy's literary corpus, then, is to clear the way for a rich Christian humanism by exposing the spurious scientific humanism that has permeated modern culture.

Lost in the Cosmos furthers this purpose with a fascinating assemblage of odds and ends which the author has crafted imaginatively into a mock self-help quiz. The reader is presented with multiple-choice questions which span what Percy calls the deranged world from Descartes to Dear Abbey. The answers are neither right nor wrong (though some are more right than others). The ingenious format gives Percy a framework for his own insights and musings. Along the way one is treated to a script for "The Last Donahue Show," a forty-page excursus on semiotic theory, an explanation of "Why Writers Drink," and two science fiction space odysseys.

Through it all Percy probes the various "selves" discernable in post-religious culture. About the Bored Self he asks "why the Self is the only Object in the Cosmos which gets Bored." About the Depressed Self, he asks "whether the Self is Depressed because there is Something Wrong with it or whether Depression is a Normal Response to a Deranged World." About the Lonely Self he inquires "why the Autonomous Self feels so Alone in the Cosmos that it will go to any Length to talk to Chimpanzees, Dolphins, and Humpback Whales." The Promiscuous Self prompts him to ask,

> Why is it that One's Self often not only does not Prefer Sex with one's Chosen Mate, Chosen for His or Her Attractiveness and Suitability, even when the Mate is a Person well known to one, knowing of one, loved by one, with a Life, Time, and Family in common, but rather prefers Sex with a New Person even a Total Stranger, or even Vicariously through Pornography?

In addition, there are the Impoverished Self, the Fearful Self, the Amnesiac Self, the Envious Self, and the Self-Marooned in the Cosmos.

In the end, Percy holds out little hope. He offers no gospel sermons. There is no altar call. Some, in fact, may see in this latest book signs of a darkening of his vision. His hope seems to have grown thin and frazzled, his faith problematic at best. He speaks of "God" as more or less real depending on whether you are an unbeliever or a believer, and even if the latter, then God as more or less problematical." He finds the churches disappointing. "If Christ brings us new life," he writes, "it is all the more remarkable that the church, the bearer of this good news, should be among the most dispirited institutions of the age." In a recent novel Percy has the main character say this: "There are only two classes of people, the believers and the unbelievers. The only difficulty is deciding which is the more feckless . . . . As unacceptable as believers are, unbelievers are even worse." For Percy, the predicament of the self is such that religious faith has become pale, anemic, and easily perverted, if not an outright impossibility.

Walker Percy, I have concluded, is a modern-day Qoheleth, decrying and debunking all that is done "under the sun." As with the Hebrew Preacher, the effect is devastating. Though Percy does not suggest that a person can make sense of the self in the cosmos through faith in a transcendent God, he leaves virtually no other alternative in the end. To that extent, the book can serve as a prologue for Christian faith. And if it were indeed *The Last Self-Help Book,* we would be forever in Walker Percy's debt. **MISSION**

(Science and Faith, continued from p. 12)

to know God and his Son for yourself. Let your faith put roots down deep into the soil of God's grace. And as your faith becomes personal and strong, you can face the world's skepticism with a settled peace, weighing and reflecting on all you see and hear.

With faith in God as an anchor, there is absolutely nothing to fear. Though you may need occasionally to adjust as your knowledge increases, you will never need to outgrow your faith, just to grow *in* your faith. The kingdom is not divided. When all the data are in, the scholars will see that God is behind and in it all. Having believed it all along, you will rejoice that others, through science, have come to praise your Lord! **MISSION**

(Redemption, continued from p. 14)

> tions, my senses, my sexuality, my money—all that I touch and everything that touches me needs redeeming.

We need now to turn to the real puzzles: Why do I and all that is about me need redemption, and of what does redemption ultimately consist?

MISSION

(Baptism, continued from p. 16)

13-32.

[2]See William S. LaSor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 142-53.

[3]Few scholars recognize any significant influence from the mystery cults.

Reflections on Conferences

Abilene Christian University Lectureship, *By John Smith*

We came from everywhere. Hurtling down interstates, creeping through small towns, eyes in our rear view mirrors, from every conceivable direction we came. In ones, twos, van loads, even plane loads, like blood rushing from arteries to veins hurrying to return to its source, the pulsating, enervating center, so we came as to a summons, an appointment, ordained, predetermined long ago. We came to be recognized and to recognize. We came to share. We came out of loneliness, frustration, arrogance, and need. We came to be healed. We came to rub shoulders with the great ones, hoping that some of their magic might descend on us. And as we drew near, our excitement and expectation grew to a fever pitch so that when we finally arrived we rushed from our cars to the great meeting centers. We had combed and colored our hair in clever ways to cover receding hairlines and creeping grey. Three-piece suits hid a multitude of sins, but we were older in ways that cannot be disguised.

As we moved out, our eyes searched everywhere in anticipation; and as we saw those for whom we searched, our loud, brash voices carried salutations across the campus, across the room, across the auditorium, and we moved rapidly toward each other and we embraced without shame. Some cried for joy. There was much goodwill and genuine affection as we greeted, but not all.

We spoke of the dear departed past, and of those we had not yet seen, and of those whom we would not see, and yet of others that we would never see; and our faces became sad, our tones softened. And for a few moments we were ourselves and we showed our nakedness, our vulnerability, and we were embarrassed.

We recovered quickly and once again we spoke loudly of our success, our baptisms, our building programs, bus programs, special contributions, anticipated growth, meetings we would hold, seminars we would be involved in; and our words allowed us to occupy a greater space than reality permits us to for extended periods.

Periodically, we even attended a lecture or two so that we could tell the folks back home what or whom we had heard. There were many fine things said, many great speeches. There was much not worth repeating, and some better not said.

In the afternoons and late in the nights we sat across little round tables in motel rooms and our eyes grew soft and serious, and our voices became quiet and we said, "How's it really going?" We confessed our sins, our failures; we talked truthfully about our wives and children. We looked at each other in the dim light and saw faces lined with care and doubt; and in those faces we saw our real brothers, fellow pilgrims and strangers, looking for that city which has foundations. We said our fears out loud and our doubts, and they were real things. Our hearts were full and our spirits reached out to each other and to God and we were one. It was a good time.

And then we went toward home and we grew smaller with every mile. Slowly, painfully we parted, and yet hopefully. We went home, home to wives who waited for us, praying that we would come back strengthened. We went home, frightened by the magnitude of what surrounds us, dwarfed by the challenges we face, but knowing that dotted across the surface of the map which is our world, there were others, loving us, praying for us, struggling beside us. And we went home in hope.

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Second Unity Conference, Conway, Arkansas, *By Bob Burgess*

In late January the University Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas, hosted a meeting for discussion of unity. This was the second such meeting for unity in as many years hosted by the University Church, and every delegate expressed the desire that it would become an annual gathering. A great deal of mutual understanding and appreciation for each other have grown out of these meetings. It is extremely encouraging to see the emphasis beginning to focus on the wide areas of agreement among the different churches.

Between fifty and sixty participants came mostly from Arkansas and Texas; but some other states represented were Indiana, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Most were members of Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches; but, happily, a few ministers from other churches were also there. Ministers outnumbered other groups, but a large group of businessmen also were in attendance. A significant number of women were also present.

The main speakers included Dr. Dale Moody, Baptist minister and educator; Dr. Russell Boatman, Independent Christian Church minister and educator; and Robert Shank, Church of Christ minister and author. The speakers had much to say of interest and value, but perhaps even more important than what was said was the genuine desire of each for unity. This desire was shared by everyone and the worship in song and prayer was heartfelt. There was a complete absence of any repetitious casualness that can sometimes characterize the more pious aspects of worship.

The meeting provided numerous opportunities for small discussions. Everyone had the chance to speak freely on various topics, e.g., practical ways churches could work together, doctrinal points, barriers to unity, evangelization, etc.

The most significant sign of the desire to unify came paradoxically when a disagreement arose over the place of Baptism in salvation. Everyone at the meeting including Dr. Moody (who seemed to be in agreement with British Baptist G.R. Beasley-Murray on the importance of Baptism) agreed that Baptism is indeed in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, to receive the Holy Spirit, to be made a part of the body, to die and rise with Christ. Some took the position, however, that everyone who confesses that Jesus is Lord and tries to live according to that confession should be received as brethren whether or not those fellow confessors agreed with what the restoration tradition says about Baptism. The ones taking this position felt that the judgment of fellow confessors should be left to the Lord, inasmuch as he is the one who is confessed as their Lord. We who are baptized for what we feel to be biblical reasons will be judged by the Lord; and fellow confessors should receive the same hope, i.e., being judged by the Lord. It was further held that those who would accept fellow confessors as brethren should engage in dialogue about the biblical teaching regarding Baptism, but as family members and not as outsiders to faith in Christ.

The response to this was mixed: (1) Some felt that there is a kind of inconsistency for some in the restoration movement to feel that Baptism is all that the Bible says it is and yet accept as brethren those who do not see it the way we do. This would make God a respecter of persons. (2) Some felt that those embracing the open position do not really believe in the importance of Baptism. (This view I think represented a reaction to rather than an understanding of the open position).

To come back to the original point: Although there was disagreement among the participants about accepting those who do not view Baptism the same way as we in the restoration movement do and although the dissenters became somewhat emotional, it was a disagreement among family members. Mutual respect prevailed. It was indeed significant that we could voice differing opinions over such an important doctrine as Baptism and yet emphasize our agreement on its importance without excommunicating each other for differing stances.

All in all, one received encouragement that unity in Christ Jesus is a strong possibility; but there also is great relief in knowing that it will not be easy. Unity at any cost would signal absence of conviction. The strong possibility of unity suggests, however, the ebb of dogmatism.

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A Conference at Central Church of Christ, Irving, Texas, *By Bobbie Lee Holley*

"I've been challenged in my thinking and stirred in my emotions and at times my spirit has wanted to cry out "Hallelujah. We've had a grand and glorious time sharing together, learning from one another, and mutually respecting one another."

"One of the highlights of this symposium has been the atmosphere of safety, and it's been refreshing to hear everyone not hold back and to be able to speak one's piece and to let one's heart out. That couldn't be done—because we are individually too threatened—except when there is the atmosphere of love and acceptance, along with expectation. No one should lightly regard that."

"It's been a weekend of joy and hope."

"I didn't want to come, but the time has been real special to me. We've talked a lot about struggling times and stormy times. Over the years I've had a lot of pain and hurt and anger and resentment. But I discovered last night that the pain and hurt were gone and there's no resentment left."

These were the feelings expressed at the end of the conference on "Coping with the Challenge of Change." People had come from as far as Boyertown, Pennsylvania; Riverside and Pasadena, California; Stillwater and Lawton, Oklahoma; Detroit, Michigan; and Roswell, New Mexico. The theme of the seminar and the longing to find others who were aware of the inevitability of change and who were engaged in the struggles of change in very traditional backgrounds seemed to be the drawing card. When they arrived—along with those from nearer places—they found a warm reception, a place of acceptance, and deeply committed people who above all else were seeking to glorify God in their lives and in their congregations.

A spirit of honesty and openness prevailed—honesty in seeking to understand where and why change is necessary, honesty in seeking God's guidance, and honesty in willingness to make changes that seem fitting and

right no matter what the circumstances or the opposition. Many brought their own doubts and hurts and struggles and found themselves listened to and lifted up. Surely it was a time of renewal, inspiration, and encouragement in the fresh and soothing breezes of God's love and the moving of his Spirit.

There were some stormy places too: disagreements, labeling, and perhaps some skepticism. Some centers were the roles of women, innovation in worship, and the sectarianism of our exclusivism. Yet what might have become gale-force winds were dissipated in listening, understanding, acceptance, and prayer. That is not to say that there was complete agreement and all sweetness and light, for there were valid and genuine differences. Over all, though, there was a "sweet, sweet spirit" in that place.

The format of the program involved five three-person panels, each person speaking for fifteen minutes. Panels were followed by small group discussions. All groups reassembled for summary statements and questions directed to the panel.

Surveying the Winds. The panelists in this first session addressed the following questions: Where are we in our response to the great social needs and issues of our day? What are we doing for the broken and troubled people among and around us? Are we a world-denying separatist movement or a universal fellowship of acceptance and relevant help?

Larry James, minister of the Richardson East Church, held up Jesus as the model: "Jesus linked genuine discipleship and a faithful pursuit of equity and compassion in facing the needs of others." Equally beyond question is the fact that "we have not seen clearly enough the connection between Jesus' powerful words regarding social justice and human compassion and the contemporary needs of our fellow human beings." Because "we have failed to clearly articulate the social implications of the Gospel," we need to reevaluate and to understand "that death to self in this social/political context may mean advocacy for the interests of others at the expense of personal loss and self-denial for us and our families."

Nancy Myers, high school teacher from Bridgeport, Texas, related the story of her father's church (Midtown in Fort Worth) and their remarkable shift in attitude from a self-serving, doctrinaire congregation to a people-oriented church with wide-ranging benevolent programs that reach deeply into the community and into individual human lives: feeding transients, picking up food from a local restaurant to take to the elderly, ministering to those in prison (goal to baptize 800 inmates a year with follow-up contact with families and person-to-person involvement while they are in prison and after they are out), helping drug addicts. "I see that those of this traditional, large, church . . . have grown in compassion and understanding in direct proportion to their involvement with people." Joe McReynolds, minister in Searcy, Arkansas, pointed out that diversity is not all bad but that there must be integration of the parts of the body. He suggested that the prayer of Jesus for unity *will be* fully answered. He called on the participants to widen their vision, for "God is not sending his Son back to claim a tawdry, anemic Bride."

Panelists Ervin Waters and Joe Jone

Setting Our Sails. What changes are just ahead, and how will we adjust to them? What about our message, our polity, and our relevance and adaptability? How will we deal with the rapid changes taking place in our pluralistic culture? Nan Dean, teacher at Richland Hills in Fort Worth, perhaps put the entire conference into perspective when she asked at the outset, "Are our people hearing the Good News of the Grace of God?" She related some of her experiences in speaking to women's groups about this foundational topic: "Their openness has surprised me; their hunger has touched me, their quickness to grasp has assured me; their tears have told me that this Good News has been too slow in coming." "I am persuaded," she said, "that our people are hungry for these liberating truths." Bob Douglas, minister in Stillwater, Oklahoma, spoke to concerns of church polity, suggesting that our difficulties arise in part from the nature of human beings and institutions; an inadequate theology of the Holy Spirit, the church (not an institutional model but a charismatic community), salvation (by grace and not by knowledge); and too much stress on restoration rather than process. To adequately

. . . . We move out of the body of sin, as Paul puts it, into the body of Christ. That is what baptism is. You are uprooted from the body of sin and rooted in the body of Christ. Isn't that a marvelous picture? You know in the early church they had an unleavened loaf of bread and I like one loaf. Now, don't go around calling me a one-loafer. But that's the way I like it! My mother used to do it every Saturday for the church, and I am a one-cupper. But I don't mind going into my own church [Baptist] and using those Methodist wine glasses and Baptist chiclets for the Lord's Supper. I don't like it as well as I do when I bless one cup and one loaf. But you know the reason? It's not because I want to be a stickler. It's because of the powerful symbolism. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not communion in the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not communion in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10). And this is where the great view of the Church which Paul emphasizes so much was born. "For we who are many are one loaf, one body." This is a literal translation, word for word from the Greek. And because they blessed that one cup and blessed that one loaf, they came to the conclusion that they were one body in Christ as Romans 12 puts it.

Dale Moody
Unity Conference
Conway, Arkansas

relate to our changing world, we must undergo extensive changes in attitude, revise the understanding of leadership, and develop the recognition that the Christian life is a process. Kenneth Rogers, dentist and an elder at the Central church, asserted that most of the changes that have come in the Church of Christ in the last fifty years have been the adoption of successful programs of other fundamental denominations and with less adequacy. The current trend seems to be shifting from religion to marketing, appealing to self-indulgence and gratification. Substantive changes that will enable us to return to the genius of the movement to unite the followers of Christ would be altering the way we are perceived by others; going back to the Scriptures to dig out the core of what Christianity is all about, i.e., learning how to live; recomitting ourselves to what we find; keeping a clear distinction between central issues and peripheral ones; being moved to pity rather than anger by the ungodly.

Charting Some Windy Places: The Ministery of Women in the Work and Worship of the Church. The panel sitting in this windy place of discussion was composed of this writer; Joe Jones, minister and counselor from Troy, Michigan; and Ervin Waters, evangelist from Temple, Texas. In addressing the reasons and necessity for change in this area (as I had been assigned to do), I called attention to these points: (1) We must *at least consider* the idea of change and be open to restudy, to new insights, to reconsideration because "our society and culture have forced it upon us." (2) "Christian women have come to sense something that does not ring true in their identites" and "have been limited in the full use and expression of their God-given gifts." (3) "Change is necessary because scholarship, study, and observation have shown that we have been wrong in some of our interpretations, that we have been inconsistent in our beliefs and the application of them, that we have not lived as male and female in the Christian community in a way that 'urges Christ' and reflects the image of God."

Joe Jones, acknowledging that it is a "refreshing and informative enterprise to study afresh" such a topic but "far more difficult to implement the conclusions," related the journey of his congregation to reassess the life of women in the church. After a year's intensive study they drew these conclusions (among others): that God made Man both male and female, in the divine image; that the responsibility to control the earth, harness its resources, and live under the sovereign Rule of God was an equal responsibility for both the man and the woman; that the tyranny of man over woman was the result of "sin's ravishing power" rather than "God's ultimate will"; that Christ made it "possible to overcome" "what Sin and Satin had done to mankind in the Fall"; that Jesus' treatment of women should be the model for male/female relationships in the church. They then began—with great courage, humility and prayer—to integrate women into all aspects of church life and activity while at the same time maintaining "genuine respect of and sensitivity for every conscience."

Ervin Waters confessed to feelings of ambivalence about many ideas that he once felt very sure of and expressed a commendable willingness to restudy as well as the desire to remain biblical. He affirmed an overarching principle: that women as well as men are—if they be Christ's—Abraham's seed and "heirs according to the promise." He then clearly pointed out some of the seeming contradictions in Scriptures referring to women and especially our inconsistencies between word and deed.

We need to restore real autonomy, that is, autonomy which is genuinely congregational and to see polity in terms of Spirit-equipped, caring response to need, rather than in terms of formal "offices."

—Bob Douglas

We can build the biggest church in Dallas, etc.; but if we disappoint Jesus in this matter of unity, we've not succeeded.

—Joe McReynolds

I do not know how many of me there are, but my greatest struggle to stay in the Church of Christ is not music, women, and morality, but the desperate need for a church service that let's me worship. That is, one that is so planned and structured that I can with appropriate environmental assistance concentrate on worship and not struggle to help someone find his place around the communion table or word a decent prayer.

—Paul Magee

Our young people see so clearly that some of their elders are encased in cocoons of self-righteous, self-protectiveness—because it is less threatening to their safe conceptions of how things should be. But this attitude serves no one. And unless we change, we will lose these young people to any active involvement in the church.

—Nancy Myers

Recently I heard of a brother who commented that someday he was going to ask the Lord why he allowed so many millions to suffer in hunger, illness, pain, and sorrow unnecessarily in view of the inequitable distribution of wealth, etc. in the world. Whoever heard the planned inquiry responded, "I rather expect the Lord will be asking that question of you."

—Larry James

We are learning, we are progressing, and we are recognizing one another as the brothers and sisters we are. Light is breaking. A brighter day is dawning.

—Ervin Waters

(From the Irving Conference)

Charting Some Windy Places: The Nature and Reality of Worship. The power and meaning of worship and vehicles of worship was a topic in which great interest was expressed throughout the seminar—in small group discussions, in personal expressions before the entire group as well as in the panel on "the nature and reality of worship." Jim Bevis, minister of the Quail Valley Church in Houston, revealed the changes in his life and in the life of the previous congregation where he had preached when they came to a greater understanding and a deeper experience of worship. "When we get back to genuine worship and seeing God as he really is, other things will fall in place; we will know times of

refreshing from the Lord." When his congregation began to talk *to* God rather than *about* him and to focus on God and his greatness and grandeur rather than spending all the time talking *about* God or personal experiences or each other, it began to revolutionize the life of the congregation. Praising God in the midst or dryness resulted in renewal.

Lynn Mitchell expressed concern about a dichotomy that seemed to emerge in discussion he had heard during the conference, i.e., the dichotomy between culture and "thus said the Lord." Very skillfully he developed the idea that all worship forms are cultural and historical and that the important things is what does the form mean in the light of Jesus Christ. He pointed out that Christ himself took cultural forms and gave them new meaning. Paul Magee, who teaches at North Lake College and at the Central Church, passionately pled for more attention to the nature of our corporate worship. We need to "get off the 'default mode' of throwing together a few songs and 'whose turn is it to pray,'" of using materials (even Scripture selections sometimes) that are not "respectable artistically, linguistically, or intellectually." He asked for a "worship service" that allows us to worship: one that "looks to ultimates and to the mystery of God," that incorporates "quietude, reflection and intellectual challenge." The Sunday morning assembly, he believes, *is the most important hour in the life of the church.*

A Major Storm Center. Panelists Roxy Thomas, former missionary and co-laborer with her husband in many fields of education and ministry, from Conway, Arkansas; Phil Elkins, from Fuller Theological Seminary and the Arcadia Church of Christ in Pasadena, California; and Jim Reynolds, attorney and interim minister at Lake Highlands Church, Dallas, explored some of the values and weaknesses in our heritage: exclusivism, relating to other fellowships of believers, the sectarian stigma of our name. Roxy Thomas, in her gracious way, related her pilgrimage (along with her husband) through many changes of attitude and practice in their ministry. She spoke gratefully of the experiences that led her to see that "we talk about the church more then we do the Lord," that they were guilty of the "Elijah Complex" in trying to decide "for the Lord just who his children were," and that "we might all be erring children of God but loved and forgiven because of the perfection of Christ." They were avenues God used to "soften us, to discipline us to become more loving in our attitude toward all people who love him and his word."

Phil Elkins was asked especially to address the reasons why many open, pluralistic churches do not grow. Among those he mentioned were the tendency toward a reactionary posture (those who set themselves up as critics *who know*); the lack of strong leadership; the tendency toward lack of holiness and little emphasis on servanthood; a crisis of identity; and attempting growth through gimmickry rather than faithfulness to God.

Jim Reynolds was asked to describe the positive aspects of the "old church." He pointed out that the old church, the church of our youth, taught us that to be a Christian was costly, that we had to struggle against society and learn to say "no." But now we have formed an easy alliance with the world; and unless we renew our understanding of God, understand the profound truth of being justified by God through faith and drink deeply at the well of the Spirit, we will wander aimlessly and tastelessly because we do not follow Christ.

On Friday evening when the conferrees had dinner together, Leroy Garrett, who had been one of the prime movers of the conference, spoke of "some friends" who had made significant impact on his life—some of them friends only by virtue of his having read their books. The conference concluded on Saturday morning with "weather reports" from congregations and individuals and a final lesson from J. Harold Thomas. Harold Thomas brought us back to our center when he spoke of "The Lord of the Winds: The Lord who is in charge, the Lord who is in control; the Lord who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we are able to ask or think." He cautioned that we too often believe ourselves to be the stirrer of winds of change or the wind itself. Rather, "our spirit should be the spirit of looking for the wind that the Lord sends and trusting the Lord of the winds."

The prayer that Jim Carter, minister at the Irving Church, had prayed at the opening had been answered: "Our God, we acknowledge you as the Lord of heaven and the Lord of earth, the Lord of the harvest, the Lord of Hosts as well as the Lord of our lives. And we invite you now to be the Lord of this conference. We pray, dear Father, that you will purge us of any spirit that might mar this occasion and help us to be like our Leader—gentle and patient and kind and loving. Amen"

MISSION

Mission Board Member Bob Douglas (left) chats with Paul and Peggy Magee at Irving Conference.

FORUM

I read Mission every time it comes. I think *Mission* has had and can have a valuable effect on the "brotherhood."

Mission has over the years given needed prophetic criticism of the establishment . . . . This is its strength and its weakness. The problems with being a prophetic journal is that there is no such thing as a permanent prophetic vocation . . . . There are only prophetic situations . . . . A true prophet must love the peace of his/her communion more than anything else except God and God's Word . . . . Not every malcontent is a prophet. Who can pass the test?

For example, take Bruce Edward's review of the Warren and Shelly books in the February issue. I know both Warren and Shelly. Both are arguing sincerely for what they believe is right and healthy. I'm sure it was not intentional but the review struck me as unsympathetic (especially in speaking of Warren's book) with the agonizing time some real human being have in breaking with the past. For the author of the review the struggles are long past, and his impatience comes to the surface time and again. But for others of God's children they are life and death matters! For them these issues are not simply back in the "harrowing days of Austin McGary and Daniel Sommer." They involve their present relationship with God at the deepest level of their being! The review was not an argument. It was . . . more of an insult. And insults do not facilitate change.

Though Edwards was mildly complimentary of Shelly, the review had an air of condescension about it. It was all stage-setting for the final line which was too good to pass up: "A book like Shelly's sweetly tantalizes us with the possibility that the first century world really can inhabit ours; a book like Warren's proves conclusively that it cannot." . . . By disregarding a few differences, he makes Warren and Shelly say the same old stuff. His reductionism is an abstraction which reduces the diversity of feelings, conscience, and thought of a million real, flesh and blood, historically conditioned people to "restorationism." For thousands of people Shelly's thought is a viable option to help them deal with the break-down of their traditional world . . . . If Shelly's position can help some of God's children integrate the feelings of their hearts with the thoughts of their heads, even if only temporarily, God be praised!

All the abstract or absolute truths in the world will not help one real person. Truth is communal. I dare say that Shelly with his brand of "restorationism" will help more people on to a more viable faith than a hundred articles which advocate the immediate abandonment of the meaning system which has hitherto supported their religious lives!

Ron Highfield
Houston, Texas

I continue to appreciate *Mission Journal*. The things I read are well-prepared, thoughtful and stimulating. I have appreciated the many articles over the past several months that have dealt with the restoration movement. Even when they have been painful to read, I have known that they are needed. Without expressing any specific criticism of any particular article, however, I will say that the overall tone thus far has been a negative one. I would like to see some "balance"—some articles that would by no means condone the sectarianism that has been too frequent a part of our movement, yet would emphasize those things that are good about the movement and that need to be encouraged.

Mike Sanders
Olympia, Washington

. . . the February issue was simply outstanding! I would really enjoy seeing more articles dealing with the ecumenical spirit of our restoration heritage.

Dan Vaughn
Basking Ridge, New Jersey

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